

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 24 FEBRUARY 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Virtual Network

Question reference number: HS 47

Senator: Adams

Type of question: Written

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Question:

I am informed that Centrelink is using a model of a "distributed virtual network" for its claims processing where claims are sent to the most skilled persons and teams for assessment. Under those circumstances:

- a) Why are skilled staff being centralised in Perth and those skills and opportunities for professional development not being distributed into regional & rural offices and is there any obstacle to that happening, and if so, what is it?

Answer:

Processing of claims and other complex work has been consolidated in Centrelink for a number of years. Teams are situated in many locations around Australia, including regional and rural areas.

Some complex work is well suited to teams of staff sitting together doing 'like work', whether that is in a city location or remote/regional Australia. Given the distribution of processing teams across the country, opportunities exist for staff outside the metropolitan areas in all states; for example, in Western Australia Centrelink has a processing team located in Bunbury.